

Message Text

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ACTION AF-06

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SY-05 SCS-03 SCA-01 L-02 H-02 SSO-00

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O 290645Z MAR 75

FM AMEMBASSY TANANARIVE

TO SECSTATE WASHDC NIACT IMMEDIATE 7092

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EO 11652: N/A

TAGS: CASC MA (REPPAS, GEORGE)

SUBJECT: REPPAS DISAPPEARS

REF: A. TANANARIVE 0554; B. TANANARIVE 0562

SUMMARY: REPPAS DID NOT RETURN TO EMBASSY NIGHT OF MARCH 28 AND APPARENTLY HAS MADE ATTEMPT TO ESCAPE. GOMR AUTHORITIES NOTIFIED. REPPAS LAST SEEN IN TOWN MORNING OF MARCH 28.. AS OF 0900 29 MARCH HE HAS NOT BEEN HEARD FROM OR SEEN.
END SUMMARY.

1. EVENING CHECK ON MARCH 28 AT 2030 HOURS OF REPPAS ROOM DISCLOSED THAT REPPAS NOT THERE. MARINE GUARD CALLED DCM WHO AFTER BRIEF DISCUSSION WITH MARINE GUARD AND AMBASSADOR CALLED SECGEN BEZAZA OF MOFA AT HIS HOME SHORTLY BEFORE 2100 HOURS. SECGEN ASKED WHETHER REPPAS HAD STAYED OUT AT NIGHT ON OTHER OCCASIONS. DCM REPLIED HE HAD ONCE BUT HAD CALLED EMBASSY RIGHT AFTER CURFEW AND INFORMED EMBASSY WHERE HE WAS STAYING. HE DID NOT CALL NIGHT OF MARCH 28. SECGEN THEN ASKED SOME QUESTIONS CONCERNING INFO IN REFTEL B. SECGEN EXPRESSED HIS THANKS FOR CALL AND SAID HE WOULD NOTIFY COMPETENT GOMR AUTHORITIES.

2. REPPAS WAS LAST SEEN AT EMBASSY BEFORE OFFICE HOURS MARCH 28 WHEN IN RESPONSE TO CONOFF'S MESSAGE TO SEE HIM HE LEFT HANDWRITTEN MESSAGE AT EMBASSY SAYING THAT HE WOULD

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CALL LATER. PURPOSE OF CONOFF'S DESIRE TO SEE OR TALK TO

REPPAS WAS TO INFORM HIM THAT IT WAS THEN PROBABLE HE WOULD NOT HAVE TO RETURN TO PRISON BEFORE APRIL 1, IF THEN. BY AFTER-NOON IT WAS CERTAIN HE WOULD NOT HAVE TO RETURN UNTIL APRIL 2 AT EARLIEST, AND GOOD CHANCE EXISTED THAT OTHER ARRANGEMENTS COULD BE NEGOTIATED. REPPAS, HOWEVER, NEVER CALLED OR RETURNED TO EMBASSY. HE WAS LAST SEEN ON STREET IN DOWNTOWN AREA AT ABOUT 1000 MARCH 28 BY AMERICAN RESEARCHER WHO RECOGNIZED HIM FROM NEWSPAPER PHOTOS. REPPAS WAS NOT CARRYING ANYTHING AT THAT TIME.

3. REPPAS ROOM AT EMBASSY STILL CONTAINS SOME CLOTHING AND BOX OF PERSONAL PAPERS.

4. COMMENT: THIS APPARENTLY REPRESENTS ESCAPE ATTEMPT, WITH PROBABLE CONSEQUENCES FOR HIM INDICATED REFTEL A. IT LIKELY EMBARRASS EMBASSY IN ITS RELATIONS WITH GOMR SINCE REPPAS HAS BEEN STAYING AT EMBASSY FOR MONTH AND HALF. THERE MAY WELL BE FEELING ON PART GOMR THAT EMBASSY BORE SOME UNDEFINED RESPONSIBILITY WITH RESPECT REPPAS' CONDUCT. FROM OUTSET, HOWEVER, GOMR'S TEMPORARY PAROLE OF ALL PRISONERS WAS BASED ON PRISONER'S PERSONAL COGNIZANCE AND VOLUNTARY COMPLIANCE WITH GOMR REGULATIONS. EMBASSY TOO HAS HAD TO RELY ON REPPAS' GOOD FAITH AND COOPERATION WITH US SINCE IT HAD NO AUTHORITY KEEP HIM UNDER GUARD.

MENDENHALL

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